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ABSTRACT

This study was concerned with the relationship between the perceptions public library administrators have of the possible influences of puppet use in libraries and the degree to which puppets are used in their libraries. Sixty-nine of the 80 questionnaires returned by public libraries in U.S. cities of 100,000 to 250,000 population were considered valid and used to determine these attitudes and their relationship to puppet usage. The results show that usage was most often associated with children in areas of story-telling, workshops, reading encouragement, and professional shows; that less usage was exhibited in areas of soliciting donations and discipline; and that attracting patrons was believed to be the primary motivational objective for puppet use. The study demonstrated that librarians are, in general, familiar with the variety of uses of puppets, that they tend to follow traditional patterns of use, and that the more frequent the use, the more highly developed the belief in their influence. With respect to the latter, the study was unable to establish conclusive evidence for its thesis linking administrator attitudes to actual usage. Appendices include the study questionnaire, a list of participating libraries, and the cover letter. Over thirty references are provided. (Author/RAA)

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PERCEPTIONS OF PUPPET USE BY PUBLIC
LIBRARY ADMINISTRATORS

by

Denise K. Parker

A Research Paper

Submitted to The

School of Library and Information Sciences

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of the Requirements of

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Dr. Nathan M. Smith

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ABSTRACT

Puppets have found an accepted place in our world today. They have also found a home in libraries. This study was concerned with the relationship between the perceptions public library administrators have concerning possible influences of puppet use in public libraries and the degree to which puppets are used in their libraries.

A questionnaire was designed and pretested, then sent to library administrators in eighty-nine public libraries of cities in the United States with populations of 100,000 to 250,000. The compilation of data acquired from this questionnaire was used to determine present attitudes and find existing relationships between attitudes and puppet use.

Eighty questionnaires were returned, of which sixty-nine were valid. The results indicated that puppets were used most often with children. The areas of puppet use with which administrators were most unfamiliar were soliciting donations and discipline. Puppets were used most often in the areas of storytelling, workshops, encouraging reading, and professional shows. Drawing people into the library was the area of most believed influence.

The study appears to indicate that librarians follow tradition in using puppets in public libraries. However, librarians also appear to be fairly familiar with a variety of possible uses of puppets. In general, the libraries using puppets frequently used them in more areas, with different groups and indicated a stronger belief in puppet influence. A minor relationship appears to exist between the degree

of influence puppets are believed to have by administrators and the degree of puppet use in libraries. The study failed to generate any conclusive data on this relationship, although this was the original aim of the study. Further study is necessary to determine the exact nature of the relationship existing between administrative attitudes and use.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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I would like to express much gratitude and special thanks to my parents who taught me to use my head along with the library, my classmates and friends for their support and useful input, to David for relieving the boredom by stamping and sealing envelopes with me, and to Gary for applying his fingers to the typewriter and helping out with general morale.

Many thank yous are due the public librarians who so generously responded to the questionnaire, providing some data to work with and provoking new directions of thought.

And I give a special thank you to Dr. Harold R. Oaks who first introduced me to puppets, passing on his enthusiasm and love for them.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

These days puppets are an accepted part of our society. We can believe this when Gene Siskel and Roger Ebert of "Sneak Previews" spend five minutes discussing Miss Piggy's characterization in the latest Muppet movie. The Muppets have done much to increase the popularity of puppets. "'The Muppet Show' is one of the most popular television programs in the world, viewed in more than 100 countries by a weekly audience of 235 million people."¹

The increasing popularity of puppets has brought them into use in other places besides the puppet stage; puppets are found in schools, clinics, and libraries. As more and more people recognize the flexibility and diversity puppets offer, they are used in more and different ways. The public library is a place where puppets have been and can be used in a variety of ways, for a variety of purposes, with a variety of results.

The Problem

What relationship exists between the perceptions public library administrators have concerning possible influences of puppet use in public libraries and the degree to which puppets are used in their libraries?

The attitudes of library administrators may affect the use of puppetry in libraries, particularly their attitudes toward present use,

potential use, and attributed benefits of puppets. The attitudes public library administrators have toward puppet use and their perceptions for potential use of puppets were considered, as well as results attributed to puppet use in libraries.

Puppets have generally been accepted into the children's area of the library. The possibility exists that this has restricted their use in other areas of the library. Knowing how puppets are currently used in the library--with which patrons, how often, and in what ways--may provide ideas for broader more effective use of puppets.

Although puppetry is used in many types of libraries and in various countries, this study was only concerned with the use of puppets in public libraries in the United States of America in cities with a population of 100,000 to 250,000. The study was further limited to the opinions of public library administrators.

Definition of Terms

Puppet use is any library service, display, or program which utilizes a puppet or puppets.

Public library administrators include the following positions or titles: director, head, assistant director, associate director, chief librarian, librarian, assistant librarian, coordinator, administrator.

Importance of the Study

Puppet use is on the rise in libraries. But given the popularity and effectiveness of puppets, perhaps their potential in public libraries has not been met. Traditional use has limited what is done

with puppets in libraries. Possibly mind-set restrictions have minimized the many potential uses for puppets in the library. The degree of administrative awareness of potential puppet use has never been studied, nor the relationship between administrative attitudes and actual puppet use. This information may be useful for the future planning of public librarians working with puppets.

Many librarians with existing puppet programs believe their libraries have benefited from puppet use. Puppets can draw large crowds of various ages into the building. Circulation and library cards issued can increase. Public relations can be improved. The influence of puppets as perceived by library administrators may provide additional information to be used by public librarians in budgeting and programming.

NOTES

¹Maria Cantini, Here Come the Puppets!, p. 4 (Pamphlet issued in conjunction with the PBS special "Here Come the Puppets!" produced by WQED/Pittsburgh in association with the Puppeteers of America.)

Chapter 2

THE WORLD OF PUPPETS

What are puppets? Where did they come from? Who likes them and why? What can they do? These are some of the questions that can be asked about puppets and which will be discussed in this chapter.

What Are Puppets?

Puppets come in many shapes, sizes, and colors. A broad definition is that a puppet is "an inanimate object moved in a dramatic manner by human agency."¹ The key is movement and action. Herein lies one of the attractions of puppets. Puppets in use today are generally of four types: rod puppets, glove puppets, marionettes, and shadow puppets. Rod puppets, as the name implies, are fastened to a rod which is held by the puppeteer. Glove puppets are manipulated with a hand inside of the puppet, like a glove. Most of the muppets are a combination of glove and rod puppets. Marionettes are suspended by strings from a control which the puppeteer uses to create movement. Shadow puppets are cut-out silhouettes worked against a screen with a light shining behind the puppet.

Where Did Puppets Come From?

The beginnings of puppetry are a matter of dispute. The word itself originates from the Latin pupa, meaning girl, doll, or small creature. The ending -et is a diminutive and makes it a small small

creature.² Whenever and wherever their exact origin, puppets have proven to be quasi-universal. They appear to have arisen from children's play with dolls and toys. Early puppet shows were given as street entertainment and, as their popularity rose, theaters were established.

The advent of puppetry in North America began with the native Indians. However, the earliest recorded use of European puppetry in North America is 1524. "A magician/puppeteer accompanied the explorer, Hernando Cortez when he left Mexico to search for gold in Honduras."³ As different people came to the New World they brought with them their various types of puppets as well as differing styles of puppet shows. The Twentieth Century brought increased interest in puppets and a more professional approach to puppetry. Today puppets have even made their way into educational and therapeutic roles, along with that of entertainment.

Who Likes Puppets and Why?

Sergei Obraztsov, a noted Russian puppeteer, believes that there are several reasons for the growing interest in puppets. One reason he lists is professionalism, another is society's concern for the education of children through art, a third is attention toward popular, national art.⁴ The rise of interest in popular art seems to go hand-in-hand with society's desire to educate children through art. These two have fostered professionalism in puppetry, which gives greater impetus to puppets' popularity.

Puppetry is also a means of communication. Bil Baird, a noted puppeteer, sees this as a reason for interest in the art of the puppet.

It is a part of man's ancient urge to recreate life that results in this many-layered art. More diverse than painting, sculpture, dance, song or story, puppetry has something of all of them. It is also a means of communication, an extension of human expression.⁵

Puppets seem to communicate with everyone, regardless of age.

"A puppet show. Just the thought brings a sparkle to the eye of children of all ages. And yes, to adults too."⁶ Everyone can enjoy puppets. Adults also play a part in the role of audience and may influence the younger audience members. Puppets have much to offer to every age group.

Nancy Renfro, a well-known puppeteer, believes that

while puppetry in general has made remarkable progress and growth in the area of education in the past ten years (due in part to the scattered seeds of Sesame Street), especially in the preschool, lower and middle elementary grades, there seems to be a large void of unsureness and lack of experimentation in junior and senior high and college levels.⁷

She goes on to remark that not enough is being done today to artistically inspire young people. She points out problem areas that young adults struggle with, areas in which puppets might be able to help out.

People often listen to puppets when they will not listen to others. One author relates an instance on an airplane where this was the case.

On this flight, however, no one ignored the instructions because the flight attendant used a floppy green frog to remind us about our seat belts, oxygen masks, and emergency exits. In fact, we listened as intently as any class of preschoolers. When I looked around and saw everyone smiling, I was reminded again of the effectiveness of a simple hand puppet.⁸

Jan Bussel and Ann Hogarth, British puppeteers, feel that

the whole family should go together to special programmes, designed for adults but carefully chosen with sufficient action to keep the younger ones interested. Each will take from the performance as much as it is capable of appreciating--reaching ever upwards to comprehend more.⁹

They go on to say that it is in the puppet theater that children get their first taste of objectivity. Here, as well, adults can see puppets as symbols which offer comments on humanity.¹⁰ The point is that there is an agelessness about attraction to puppets; they can offer something for all.

Puppets do indeed hold the attention of various age groups. The old and young alike enjoy the antics, problems, and laughter of puppet shows. Part of this lies in feeling empathy for the characters. Renfro feels that another part of the attraction is that "when lying on a table, a puppet is lifeless and helpless, for it has no emotions of its own and needs to be brought to life."¹¹ It requires a person for a puppet to live.

What Can Puppets Do?

Puppets are attributed with the power to accomplish much. Education and therapy have credited puppetry with the ability to change and better people in many ways, helping them to learn and grow. The areas of contribution can be divided into three types of benefits: physical, educational, and social.

Physical Benefits

The mechanical aspects of puppets help the most in this area. Placing a glove puppet on a hand and making it move requires manipulation by the hand. This manipulation develops finger dexterity and coordination, as well as eye-hand coordination. Making a puppet speak aids in the development of speech and in learning to articulate. Working the puppet also provides an opportunity for space exploration,

either in the confines of a puppet stage or an entire room. Excess energy can be burned off when a puppet is given to an active person.

For the child who needs help in developing listening skills, who finds it hard to just sit and listen to tapes in the media corner, finger puppets which he can manipulate in accompaniment to the story he is hearing can be a valuable aid. Since the child is actively involved, yet not bothering others in the classroom, his attention span lengthens. His own private delight encourages more listening, and perhaps more creative endeavors.¹²

Interest in a puppet show can motivate a nonlistener to tune-in, distinguish sounds, and put them into a meaningful context. The listener's active involvement in using a puppet may also help in listening development.

Educational Benefits

When people put on puppet shows they can involve various educational experiences. A show can draw upon creative writing, creative thinking, artistic ability, expression of ideas, and imagination. When no scripts or puppets are readily available the puppeteers must come up with a plot, lines, characters, and puppets. The creation of puppets and scripts taps the imagination and creative powers of the performers. "All learners gain experience in creative thinking by making puppets, producing stage designs, and relating these tools to a program."¹³

Ann Schwalb, a librarian who uses puppets, points out that it is imagination that brings puppets to life--the mind bridges that gap between reality and fantasy.¹⁴ Fantasy can provide much of the enjoyment of puppets. Imagination covers the span between reality and fantasy and can make the fantasy that much more believable.

Social Benefits

Puppets provide amusement and entertainment for the audience

and the puppeteers. This is perhaps the primary role of puppets. But they have many secondary roles that contribute to social development. Puppetry can increase social consciousness, aid communication, provide emotional release, develop understanding and patience. Puppetry also requires cooperation.

Puppets can draw out the timid and shy. Give a person a puppet, with a stage or none, and he may begin to open up and be drawn out. The shy person may unfold and emotions can be revealed. "The manipulator can act out through puppets his or her innermost wishes and desires without being personally threatened or challenged."¹⁵ Therapists have used this aspect of puppetry to help people with emotional problems express their feelings. Members of the audience find emotional release as well, as they live with the puppet through his moments of sadness and happiness, anger and frustration.

Putting on a puppet show requires people to develop cooperation and social responsibility. Preparing and performing a show takes the active participation of all. A show can be a good time for a lesson in manners, theater etiquette, and social responsibility to other members of the audience and the performers.

Communication is another social aspect that puppetry helps. The communication may be about the puppets, the show, or communication between the puppets. The emotional release previously mentioned forms a part of this communication. Puppetry is both a means of communication and a tool for better communication.

Summary

Puppetry began long ago and has roots in many cultures; as a

result different types of puppets and various show formats exist. Puppets are popular with all age groups mostly because of their universal appeal and ability to communicate.

Puppets can offer help in physical dexterity and coordination, speech, and listening skills. Education is another area that recognizes the contributions puppets can make in imagination, creativity, artistic ability, and expression of ideas. The social benefits of puppets include entertainment, cooperation, and communication.

NOTES

¹David Currell, The Complete Book of Puppetry (Boston: Plays, Inc., 1974), p. 1.

²Paul Mc Pharlin, The Puppet Theatre in America (Boston: Plays, Inc., 1949), p. 5.

³Maria Cantini, Here Come the Puppets!, p. 3. (Pamphlet issued in conjunction with the PBS special "Here Come the Puppets!" produced by WQED/Pittsburgh in association with the Puppeteers of America.)

⁴Sergei Obrastsov, "The Social Significance of Puppet Theatre in Contemporary Society," Soviet Literature, No. 8 (1976), 160-61.

⁵Bil Baird, The Art of the Puppet (New York: Macmillan, 1965), p. 13.

⁶"To Judge From the Crowd, Everyone Loves Puppets," Mississippi Library News, 41 (June, 1977), 69.

⁷Nancy Renfro, "Upper Education: A Time for Discovery," Puppetry Journal, 31 (July- August, 1979), 8.

⁸James W. Braley, "The Rewards of Using Puppets," When Puppets Talk Everybody Listens, Shelly Roden (Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1978), p. 4.

⁹Jan Bussel and Ann Hogarth, "The Puppet and Its Public," Soviet Literature, No. 11 (1976), 173.

¹⁰Bussel, p. 174.

¹¹Nancy Renfro, A Puppet Corner in Every Library (Austin, Texas: Nancy Renfro Studios, 1978), p. 2.

¹²Nancy Polette and Marjorie Hamlin, Reading Guidance in a Media Age (Metuchen, New Jersey: Scarecrow Press, 1975), p. 162.

¹³Mildred Laughlin, "Action Activities: Puppetry," Learning Today, 5 (Fall, 1972), 75.

¹⁴Ann Weiss Schwalb, "Puppets for Loan," School Library Journal, 24 (February, 1978), 27.

¹⁵Enid Bates and Ruth Lowes, Potpourri of Puppetry: A Handbook for Schools (Belmont, Calif.: Fearon, 1976), p. 23.

Chapter 3

PUPPETS IN LIBRARIES

The focus of the literature review was to discover in what ways puppets are being used in libraries. In particular, new or unusual uses were being sought. Along with puppet use, results occurring in the library that were attributed to puppets were examined. The compilation of ideas and examples from the literature was used in developing a questionnaire to further explore the issues.

Reported Uses of Puppets

Sherry Johnston, an MLS candidate at Brigham Young University, found that the most common use of puppets by children's librarians in the United States was for entertainment. The second most common use was for storyhour.¹ This is supported by the large number of articles written that tell of successful library use of puppets in these ways. These are the most traditional uses of puppets in libraries; however, there are other ways to utilize puppets.

Ecuador's Bibliobus

A group from the Center for International Education, Massachusetts University, Amherst and the Ministerio de Educacion Publica, Quito worked together on this project. The Bibliobus is a library on wheels.

The Bibliobus was a work instrument of the Feria Educativa which promoted education through an enjoyable two day experience using a variety of learning materials, such as the puppet theater,

campesino theater, educational games, lectures, music and films.

The goals were:

- 1) To awaken the rural communities' interest in education;
- 2) To test the effectiveness of the non-formal methods and materials in transmitting education; and
- 3) To extend the Department of Adult Education's radius of operation.²

The puppets were mainly used to attract the people and entertain the children, but the staff felt they could have been used more for educational purposes. The people responded favorably to the program. "One campesino [farmer] said: 'The best of all for me were the puppets. At the same time they entertained and diverted while presenting themes that were the problems and necessities of the community.'"³

Jackson County, Oregon's Storymobile

This program involved a group of trained storytellers dressed in costumes of their favorite storybook characters who traveled to prearranged areas where they offered traditional storytelling as well as live animals, puppet shows, group singing and books to borrow.

Once a year the Storytelling Guild and Jackson County Library System join forces for the Annual Children's Festival held at the Peter Britt Gardens. Among various activities, puppetry can be found. What was the purpose of these activities? "They wanted to show the entire community--regardless of age--that storytelling is powerful."⁴ Puppetry conveyed a part of this message.

Stafford, Pennsylvania's Circu- lating Puppet Collection

Ann Schwalb, Children's Librarian at Tredyffrin Public Library, has given an excellent blueprint for financing, publicizing, organizing,

and utilizing a puppet collection that circulates. She believes the key to success is enthusiasm and her hope is that circulating puppet collections will be organized in many libraries.⁵

Cheyenne's Bond Issue

The Laramie County Library needed a building to replace the old Carnegie Library. The problem was how to make the citizens aware of this need. The library staff decided the best way to reach all ages and promote their realization of the inadequate capacity of the building would be through puppets.

The bond issue was passed and puppet programs have continued to be an important part of the library. Local clubs and organizations became involved, contributing time and money, in various activities involving puppets, including shows for hospitalized children, Christmas puppet shows, and a show for National Library Week.⁶

Ventura County's Outreach

The Ventura County Library Services Agency offered a puppet workshop in various branches as an attempt "to interest the children of this relatively poor and predominately Spanish speaking community to come into the public library."⁷ They were hoping the multi-media nature of puppet shows would appeal to many children. The performances at the completion of the workshops attracted as many as two hundred people per show, from preschoolers to senior citizens. One result of the program was greater community demand for the puppet programs. Although faced with time and money restrictions, the staff felt good about the experiences and they succeeded in getting people into the library.

Reported Results of Puppet Use

Most articles talk about the public response to puppet performances. Getting people into libraries in the first place can be a difficult task. Librarians have used puppets to draw people in and they feel that puppets can attract patrons that might never have crossed the library threshold otherwise. Programs for children can help parents discover the library as well.

A common result attributed to puppet use is an increase in circulation.⁸ This may be a result of getting more people into the library, but it may also be that books relating to puppets or books upon which scripts are based also circulate. Some programs are specifically designed to encourage and motivate reading. If these are successful, circulation should increase as well.

Puppet programs have also been effective in soliciting and obtaining funds and donations. Some libraries present puppet plays specifically to adults for this purpose.

Two long-lasting results well worth attaining are to have the patrons continue to return to the library throughout their lifetime and to present an image of the library as a warm and interesting place.

NOTES

¹Sherry Gale Johnston, "A Survey of Puppet Programming Among Children's Librarians in the United States," (MLS project, Brigham Young University, 1978), p. 16.

²Carlos Moreno and others, Puppets and the Theater, Technical Note No. 12, U.S., Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC Document ED 172 206, 1976, p. 24.

³Moreno, p. 29.

⁴Jeannette Paulson, "Storytelling in Jackson County," Childhood Education, 57 (March/April, 1981), 210.

⁵Ann Weiss Schwalb, "Puppets for Loan," School Library Journal, 24 (February, 1978), 29.

⁶Roberta Wright, "A True Puppet Story," Wyoming Library Roundup, 26 (March-December, 1971), 23-25.

⁷Jacqueline M. Wakefield, "Puppetry: An Alternate Expression," California Librarian, 36 (July, 1975), 41.

⁸Linda P. Tramontozzi, "A Gift to Children--With Strings Attached," Horn Book, 48 (December, 1972), 642.

Chapter 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The aim of this study was to examine perceptions of public library administrators about puppet use in libraries and actual puppet use. A questionnaire was designed to solicit responses indicative of present puppet use in each public library, familiarity with various uses of puppets in libraries, and perceived results of puppet use (Appendix A).

The list of puppet uses and perceived results found in the literature search was categorized and condensed and a sample questionnaire was drawn up. Likert-type scales were implemented because of their flexibility and ease of measurement. Each scale consisted of a five number ranking, with each end of the scale being a positive or negative qualifier. Three age groups, children, young adults (YA), and adults, were included on the basis that these exist as service divisions in many libraries. The decision was made that asking the respondent's position would be the simplest means of determining if an administrative position were held. A general definition of which types of puppets to include was indicated. Space was left for written comments, so respondents could clarify or expound on answers.

The aim of design was simplicity and eye-appeal. Instructions were kept to a minimum by using a format that was almost self-explanatory. The hope was that a short, simple, understandable questionnaire would increase return results, particularly as administrators have many demands

on their time.

As a result of a questionnaire pre-test its size was reduced to three half-page sheets, the second Likert scale was modified, and a final sentence requesting the respondents to mail the questionnaire was added.

The questionnaire pre-test involved nine people with library, administrative, or both types of backgrounds. They were given a sample cover letter and a questionnaire which they were asked to complete, noting any comments, areas of incomprehensibility, general suggestions, modifications, or changes. With their suggestions and comments and the general observations of how the sample questionnaires were answered, the questionnaire was refined.

The overwhelming task of looking at all public libraries in the United States of America prompted a limitation by city size. Only cities from 100,000 to 250,000 inhabitants were considered. The Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1980 lists eighty-nine cities in this category.¹ The public libraries located in these cities were the focus of the study.

The American Library Directory indicates that four cities this size have no public library, twenty have county libraries only, and six cities have regional libraries only.² In order to further limit the population size of the study the decision was made to exclude all state, regional, and county libraries and library systems except where they were the only public library available to the community. The majority of the eighty-nine libraries included in the study were city libraries (Appendix B).

Administrators of the public libraries constituted the population of the study. A questionnaire was sent to the administrative office of each library, addressed to the director. A hand-signed cover letter accompanying it requested that one of the library administrators answer the questions (Appendix C). Library administrators hold various titles, such as director, head, assistant director, chief librarian, librarian, assistant librarian, coordinator, or administrator. The actual title was not of importance so long as the respondent held an administrative position within the library. The decision was made that respondents serving as children's or young people's librarian, or in similar positions, would be included in the administrative category, if they were responsible for more than two library branches.

The questionnaires were mailed to the eighty-nine public libraries designated to receive them. The addresses of the libraries were obtained from the American Library Directory and each envelope was addressed "Director." Each envelope mailed included a copy of the questionnaire, a cover letter, and a stamped, self-addressed return envelope. Approximately two weeks were allowed for response.

Returned questionnaires not answered by administrators, as defined, were not included in the tabulated results. As responses arrived, the return address or post-marked city on the return envelope was noted on the questionnaires since they had not been coded. It was assumed that the returned survey would be mailed near the location of the library. The location became important because the position title of the respondent did not always clearly reflect if it were administrative or not. With the location information the American Library Directory could be checked to determine if the position was in fact

administrative as defined in this study.

The questionnaires that did not indicate position or location were included as valid to increase the number of total responses and based on the assumption that there was a 50 percent chance that they had been answered by administrators. Invalid questionnaires included respondents that did not hold administrative positions and responses received after results had been tabulated.

The data on perceptions and actual puppet use derived from the valid questionnaires were key punched and the Statistical Program for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was run. This program aided in the frequency tabulation of perceptions of puppet use, actual use, and attributed results. All written comments were compiled as well.

NOTES

¹U.S. Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1980 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1980), pp. 24-26.

²American Library Directory (33d ed.; New York: R.R. Bowker, 1980).

Chapter 5

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Of the eighty-nine questionnaires mailed, eighty were returned, which indicated a response of 89.88 percent. Of these, sixty-nine or 77.52 percent were valid and subsequently tabulated.

The data indicated that puppets were almost exclusively used with children. One typical response was, "As far back as we can remember, puppets have been used only with children." The only areas that showed significant use with other groups were professional shows, displays, and workshops. Over one-fourth of the librarians indicated that puppets were used with adults in these areas. Thirteen libraries indicated use of circulating puppets with adults. All other areas showed less than 10 percent use with adults.

Use of puppets with young adults was low, with the highest use reported as professional shows. Twelve libraries, or 17 percent, indicated this use with young adults. The next highest use was in displays (15 percent), then workshops (11 percent), and finally storytelling (10 percent).

Other groups with which librarians used puppets were the mentally retarded, senior citizens, and nursing home residents in storytelling and professional shows. Puppets were used with library staff and personnel in the areas of workshops, circulating puppet collections, and in-house puppet corners. One respondent indicated that two puppets, Com Cat and Micro Fish, helped all the staff learn

the use of new technology at a Technical Services workshop.

Less than 27 percent of the libraries did not use puppets with children in soliciting donations. This area was used least with all age groups and showed the highest area of unfamiliarity.

The data indicated respondents were familiar with most forms of puppet use. Thirteen responses of unfamiliarity were recorded under solicit donations (Table 1). This was the most unfamiliar area of puppet use. The next least familiar area was discipline, with twelve respondents (17 percent) marking this. Seven respondents indicated unfamiliarity with using puppets in public relations, while five marked mascot and five indicated outreach.

Table 1

Number of Respondents Unfamiliar With Puppet Uses

Storytelling	0	Circulating Puppets	1
Professional Shows	1	Public Relations	7
Displays	1	Puppet Corner	1
Teach Library Skills	3	Solicit Donations	13
Mascot	5	Outreach	5
Discipline	12	Encourage Reading	2
Workshops	2		N=69

One respondent made an interesting comment. " [I] Am aware of different possibilities for using puppets, but have purposely not used [them] for other than entertainment." Unfortunately, no further elaboration was given.

The areas showing the most frequent uses of puppets were storytelling, workshops, for encouraging reading, and professional shows

(Table 2). The Likert-scale mean responses for storytelling and workshops were both 2.855. The higher the mean the less frequently puppets were used. Encouraging reading had a mean of 2.870 and professional shows 2.986. All other areas had means above 3.5 except public relations and outreach. The highest mean was 4.0 indicated in the area of circulating puppet collections.

As a general rule libraries that used puppets often used them in a variety of different areas. Another correlation was that the less puppets were used the less familiar with various uses and the less believed influence of puppets were indicated by respondents.

Some librarians indicated that they were aware of various uses and possible benefits of puppets, but due to staffing, time, and funds, puppets were limited in actual use. One library experienced a loss of their puppet program when budget crunches hit in 1980. Another library indicated that their staff donated personal time in making puppets. Several libraries indicated that both puppets and stages had been obtained either through donations or grants where ordinary funds did not cover expenses for puppet programs.

A general trend was that libraries using puppets frequently also believed their influence to be major. The area receiving the most attributed influence was drawing people into the library (Table 3). The Likert-scale mean response of 3.493 was reflected by comments such as the following. "They are the most popular of all our programs." "Programs featuring puppets always have the largest attendance." The higher the mean, the greater the believed influence of puppets in an area.

Table 2
Percentage of Library Puppet Use

Area	Responses						Mean Response
	Always 1	2	3	4	Never 5	No Response	
Storytelling	5.8	26.1	44.9	23.2	0	0	2.855
Professional Shows	11.6	20.3	18.8	27.5	15.9	5.8	2.986
Displays	2.9	8.7	24.6	39.1	21.7	2.9	2.986
Teach Library Skills	1.4	7.2	13.0	18.8	52.2	7.2	3.913
Mascot	2.9	11.6	15.9	21.7	42.0	5.8	3.710
Discipline	0	4.3	8.7	13.0	60.9	13.0	3.913
Workshops	13.0	15.9	26.1	26.1	11.6	7.2	2.855
Circulating Puppet Collection	10.1	4.3	10.1	11.6	60.9	2.9	4.000
Public Relations	4.3	7.2	18.8	14.5	36.2	18.8	3.145
In-House Puppet Corner	14.5	13.0	11.6	10.1	47.8	2.9	3.551
Solicit Donations	0	2.9	0	8.7	68.1	20.3	3.812
Outreach	10.1	11.6	11.6	27.5	29.0	10.1	3.232
Encourage Reading	14.5	18.8	23.2	15.9	20.3	7.2	2.870

The next highest area of believed influence was public awareness, with a mean of 3.130. Circulation and library cards had means of 2.623 and 2.478 respectively. The area considered least influential was obtaining donations. Thirty-five libraries checked one, a minor influence, for this; the mean was 1.507. This may be related to the data that indicated unfamiliarity with puppet use in soliciting donations. Although space was left for written comments, no other influences were suggested by the respondents.

Table 3

Influence Attributed to Puppet Use

Area	Mean Reponse
Circulation	2.623 *
Library Cards	2.478
Draw People Into Library	3.493
Public Awareness	3.130
Obtain Donations	1.507

* Likert scale 1=minor
5=major

Some of the written comments indicated librarians' feelings about puppets' influence. One librarian wrote, "Puppets used effectively can accomplish many goals." Another librarian synthesized the influence of puppets in their library. "It is difficult to check the degree of influence puppets might have in the other areas. Circulation goes up when there is a puppet show at a library. At the same program, people/ children apply for cards, since they are in the library. [The] public becomes more aware of the library because we advertise in all the local newspapers."

Chapter 6

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The goal of this study was to explore what relationship exists between the perceptions public library administrators have concerning possible influences of puppet use in public libraries and how often, in what ways, and with whom puppets are actually used.

To answer this question a questionnaire was designed and mailed to eighty-nine public libraries throughout the United States. The responses to this questionnaire were then compiled and tabulated. The results failed to establish any major relationships.

Conclusions

One of the surprises of this study was the high questionnaire return rate of 89.88 percent. Several possible reasons for this response exist. One of these is the popularity of puppets and recent increase in their use in libraries, as noted in the literature. Another reason might be the size of the cities in which the libraries were located. The communities studied are growing and expanding rapidly and, because of the needs of their citizens, the libraries may be more concerned and interested in public services. A third possibility is the information orientation of librarians which could increase responsiveness to an information gathering survey. Possibly the brevity or simplified design of the questionnaire contributed to the high response. Another possibility was that the self-addressed stamped envelopes encouraged returning

the survey. In dealing with a group of professionals there could be greater expectation for a higher return rate, which may have been borne out by the return rate of this study.

Age Groups

The results of the study appear to support that there is a general belief that puppets are for use with children. The number of responses in all areas, except solicit donations, show that children are the most likely targeted group to receive library programs using puppets. This result may occur because of tradition. In North America particularly, puppets have been limited to the realm of children, despite the universal popularity of the Muppets and literature promoting use with other age groups. Perhaps librarians are afraid to use puppets with others since it has not been done in libraries before. Maybe librarians have simply not thought of other possible uses for puppets in the library setting besides the ones dictated by tradition.

The relatively little use of puppets with young adults is not surprising since this group often is neglected in other areas of library service as well. This perceived general neglect may be reflected in the low percentage of responses on the questionnaire under the young adult category.

The adult population appeared to receive minimal puppet use in libraries; the highest use was in the areas of workshops, displays, and professional shows. One possible reason these areas were used was because they are safe; adults might not find puppets an insult to their maturity in these settings. The study indicated that puppets were used with senior citizens and in nursing homes. If older adults enjoy puppets,

perhaps they are appropriate for use with all adults. Examples from the literature show that puppets are a good tool for giving instructions; the library might make use of this in giving instructions in library use to all ages.

Familiarity With Uses

The familiarity section was perhaps the weakest element of the questionnaire. Either administrators were more familiar with various puppet uses than had been anticipated or the design of the questionnaire was at fault. Total response to this section was low. This may have been because of a misunderstanding of the question or the proximity of it to the never response in the section on how often puppets were used. The location of the familiarity question to both the frequency of use and use with groups may have been confusing. Unfamiliarity with soliciting donations was the highest, although still a low number.

Frequency of Use

The areas in which puppets were used most often, as indicated in the study, were storytelling, workshops, encouraging reading, and professional shows. Possible reasons for this were the ease and comfort of using puppets in the traditional ways. Traditional uses may reflect a lack of creativity and imagination on the part of librarians in implementing puppets in the public library. The responses themselves indicated that time, money, and staffing influenced the use of puppets.

According to the results of this study, in libraries where puppets were used frequently, they were also used in more areas. Perhaps this was due to the fact that positive results of puppet use in one area have been seen and in consequence there was more willingness to try

puppets in other areas. It may be that these libraries are more comfortable with puppet use in general.

The study indicated that libraries using puppets less frequently did not believe puppet use to have as great an influence in the library as those using puppets more frequently. Fear of the unknown or unfamiliar may have been one of the reasons for this. Another reason might have been staff inexperience or limitations, as well as money restrictions.

By not using puppets frequently there may have been no opportunity to see any results that could be attributed to puppet use. This would tend to promote further infrequent use.

Attributed Influences

According to the study, drawing people into the library was a major believed influence of puppet use. This response may have occurred because the influence was easily attributable to that event. The number of people attending was measurable and readily visible. The cause and effect nature of the influence was fairly clear.

A minor influence was attributed to puppets in obtaining donations. There appeared to be some relationship between this response and the unfamiliarity indicated in using puppets to solicit donations. It may have been that these libraries have not tried using puppets or do not use puppets in this way and as a result saw no influence.

The other possible influences did not receive very high ratings. A possible reason for this was that circulation and library cards are influenced by many diverse factors and direct cause and effect relationship are not readily apparent or easily measured.

According to this study a minor relationship appeared to exist between the degree of influence puppets were believed to have by administrators and the use of puppets in libraries. In libraries where use has been frequent and diverse, puppets were believed to have more of a major influence. The reverse situation also appeared in the study. Whether the attitude determined the use or the use the attitude was not indicated by this study.

Although much information about puppet use came to light as a result of this study; the question about attitudes and administrative perceptions was not answered. The study failed in its original intent. Perhaps there is no relationship between administrative attitudes and puppet uses or possibly it is impossible to measure the relationship. The questionnaire might not be designed to elicit responses indicative of relationships. The original intent had been to have a computer analysis between data performed, but the design of the questionnaire and the data did not lend themselves to this type of analysis. Whatever the reason might actually be, the study failed to answer its main question.

Problems

One of the weaknesses of the study was determining if the respondents qualified as administrators. Simply indicating position title was not an adequate indication of administrative position. Another weakness was determining where the questionnaires came from as they arrived since they had not been coded previously.

The questionnaire itself had some weaknesses. One was that the first Likert scale ranked one as always and five as never and the second scale ranked one as minor and five as major, which was a reversal of

sorts. Another problem area was the familiarity section which was either not understood by respondents or too close to the never response of the first section. These areas may have created confusion for the respondents and in fact may have affected the results obtained.

Recommendations

A worthwhile study would be a follow-up in a year's time exploring whether the same libraries have changed their use of puppets or if administrative attitudes have changed. More studies of puppet use and attitudes could be done, either with a different population or emphasizing other areas.

With the experience obtained from this study, a new questionnaire could be designed that would more accurately measure the relationship between administrative attitudes and puppet use. The two Likert scales could be fixed and the position of the familiarity section altered. A more comprehensive question could be designed for determining if an administrative position were held. The questionnaire could be coded, so responses could be identified and follow-up letters sent. A new questionnaire might more adequately solicit information.

One recommendation came from comments taken from a questionnaire. "Puppets with children (and adults) have not only entertainment value but education uses. Puppets should be used often. Library Schools should encourage and teach the use of puppets." Library education needs to broaden its traditional focus and give some place to creativity and imagination. These skills can be useful to librarians, not only in using puppets, but in many areas within the library.

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APPENDIX A
QUESTIONNAIRE

In answering this questionnaire, please include as puppets: marionettes, shadow puppets, rod puppets, glove puppets, muppets, and any other type considered as puppets in your library.

Please indicate in which ways puppets are used in your library:

<u>AREA</u>	<u>HOW OFTEN USED</u>	<u>USED WITH</u>	(please specify)
STORYTELLING	1 2 3 4 5 always never	☐ unfamiliar with use in this way	☐ children ☐ YA ☐ adults ☐ other:
PROFESSIONAL SHOWS	1 2 3 4 5 always never	☐ unfamiliar with use in this way	☐ children ☐ YA ☐ adult ☐ other:
DISPLAYS	1 2 3 4 5 always never	☐ unfamiliar with use in this way	☐ children ☐ YA ☐ adults ☐ other:
TEACH LIBRARY SKILLS	1 2 3 4 5 always never	☐ unfamiliar with use in this way	☐ children ☐ YA ☐ adults ☐ other:
MASCOT	1 2 3 4 5 always never	☐ unfamiliar with use in this way	☐ children ☐ YA ☐ adults ☐ other:
DISCIPLINE	1 2 3 4 5 always never	☐ unfamiliar with use in this way	☐ children ☐ YA ☐ adults ☐ other:
WORKSHOPS	1 2 3 4 5 always never	☐ unfamiliar with use in this way	☐ children ☐ YA ☐ adults ☐ other:
COMMENTS:			

<u>AREA</u>	<u>HOW OFTEN USED</u>	<u>USED WITH</u>	(please specify)
CIRCULATING PUPPET COLLECTION	1 2 3 4 5 always never	___ unfamiliar with use in this way	___ children ___ YA ___ adults ___ other:
PUBLIC RELATIONS	1 2 3 4 5 always never	___ unfamiliar with use in this way	___ children ___ YA ___ adults ___ other:
IN-HOUSE PUPPET CORNER	1 2 3 4 5 always never	___ unfamiliar with use in this way	___ children ___ YA ___ adults ___ other:
SOLICIT DONATIONS	1 2 3 4 5 always never	___ unfamiliar with use in this way	___ children ___ YA ___ adults ___ other:
OUTREACH	1 2 3 4 5 always never	___ unfamiliar with use in this way	___ children ___ YA ___ adults ___ other:
ENCOURAGE READING	1 2 3 4 5 always never	___ unfamiliar with use in this way	___ children ___ YA ___ adults ___ other:
COMMENTS:			

What influence do you believe puppet use in libraries can have in the following areas?

CIRCULATION	1	2	3	4	5
	minor				major

LIBRARY CARDS	1	2	3	4	5
	minor				major

DRAW PEOPLE INTO LIBRARY	1	2	3	4	5
	minor				major

PUBLIC AWARENESS	1	2	3	4	5
	minor				major

OBTAIN DONATIONS	1	2	3	4	5
	minor				major

COMMENTS:

YOUR POSITION:

THANK YOU. PLEASE PLACE IN RETURN ENVELOPE AND DEPOSIT IN MAIL.

APPENDIX B
LIBRARIES RECEIVING QUESTIONNAIRES

Akron-Summit County Public Library; Akron, Ohio
Albany Public Library; Albany, New York
Guilderland Free Library; Albany, New York
Alexandria Library; Alexandria, Virginia
Allentown Public Library; Allentown, Pennsylvania
Amarillo Public Library; Amarillo, Texas
Anaheim Public Library; Anaheim, California
Ann Arbor Public Library; Ann Arbor, Michigan
Beumont Public Library; Beaumont, Texas
Berkeley Public Library; Berkeley, California
Bridgeport Public Library; Bridgeport, Connecticut
Cedar Rapids Public Library; Cedar Rapids, Iowa
Chattanooga-Hamilton County Bicentennial Library; Chattanooga, Tennessee
Pikes Peak Regional Library District; Colorado Springs, Colorado
Richland County Public Library; Columbia, South Carolina
Chattahoochee Valley Regional Library; Columbus, Georgia
Corpus Christi Public Libraries; Corpus Christi, Texas
Dayton & Montgomery County Public Library; Dayton, Ohio
Wright Memorial Library; Dayton, Ohio
Public Library of Des Moines; Des Moines, Iowa
Elizabeth Public Library; Elizabeth, New Jersey
Erie County Library System; Erie, Pennsylvania
Evansville Public Library & Vanderburgh County Public Library;
Evansville, Indiana
Willard Library of Evansville; Evansville, Indiana
Flint Public Library; Flint, Michigan

Public Library of Fort Wayne & Allen County; Fort Wayne, Indiana
Fresno County Free Library; Fresno, California
Gary Public Library; Gary, Indiana
Glendale Public Library; Glendale, California
Grand Rapids Public Library; Grand Rapids, Michigan
Greensboro Public Library; Greensboro, North Carolina
Hammond Public Library; Hammond, Indiana
Charles H. Taylor Memorial Library; Hampton, Virginia
Hartford Public Library; Hartford, Connecticut
Hialeah John F. Kennedy Library; Hialeah, Florida
Huntington Beach Library; Huntington Beach, California
Huntsville-Madison County Public Library; Huntsville, Alabama
Mid-Continent Public Library; Independence, Missouri
Jackson Metropolitan Library; Jackson, Mississippi
Jersey City Public Library; Jersey City, New Jersey
Kansas City Kansas Public Library; Kansas City, Kansas
Knoxville-Knox County Public Library; Knoxville, Tennessee
Lansing Public Library; Lansing, Michigan
Clark County Library District; Las Vegas, Nevada
Lexington Public Library; Lexington, Kentucky
Lincoln City Libraries; Lincoln, Nebraska
Central Arkansas Library System; Little Rock, Arkansas
Livonia Public Library; Livonia, Michigan
Lubbock City-County Library; Lubbock, Texas
Middle Georgia Regional Library; Macon, Georgia
Madison Public Library; Madison, Wisconsin
Montgomery City-County Public Library; Montgomery, Alabama

Public Library of Nashville & Davidson County; Nashville, Tennessee
New Haven Free Public Library; New Haven Connecticut
Newport News Public Library System; Newport News, Virginia
Pasadena Public Library; Pasadena, California
Paterson Free Public Library; Paterson, New Jersey
Peoria Public Library; Peoria, Illinois
Portsmouth Public Library; Portsmouth, Virginia
Providence Athenaeum; Providence, Rhode Island
Providence Public Library; Providence, Rhode Island
Wake County Department of the Public Library; Raleigh, North Carolina
Richmond Public Library; Richmond, Virginia
Riverside City & County Public Library; Riverside, California
Rockford Public Library; Rockford, Illinois
St. Petersburg Public Library; St. Petersburg, Florida
Salt Lake City Public Library; Salt Lake City, Utah
San Bernardino Public Library; San Bernardino, California
Santa Ana Public Library; Santa Ana, California
Chatham-Effingham-Liberty Regional Library; Savannah, Georgia
Shreve Memorial Library; Shreveport, Louisiana
South Bend Public Library; South Bend, Indiana
Spokane Public Library; Spokane, Washington
City Library; Springfield, Massachusetts
Springfield-Greene County Library; Springfield, Missouri
Stamford's Public Library; Stamford, Connecticut
Stockton-San Joaquin County Public Library; Stockton, California
Fairmount Community Library; Syracuse, New York
Onondaga Free Library; Syracuse, New York

Tacoma Public Library; Tacoma, Washington

Topeka Public Library; Topeka, Kansas

Torrence Public Library; Torrence, California

Department of Public Libraries & Information; Virginia Beach, Virginia

Warren Public Library; Warren, Michigan

Silas Bronson Library; Waterbury, Connecticut

Forsyth County Public Library; Winston-Salem, North Carolina

Yonkers Public Library; Yonkers, New York

Reuben McMillan Free Library Association; Youngstown, Ohio

APPENDIX C
COVER LETTER

115 West 400 North
Provo, Utah 84601
September 19, 1981

Dear Library Administrator:

Puppets have become so much a part of our everyday lives that we sometimes think of them as real people. Miss Piggy is a good example of this. Are libraries making use of this public interest in puppets? Since very little has been done to gather information on the topic, we do not really know.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the present use of puppets in public libraries within communities your size. Since little research has been done, your participation will be a valuable contribution.

The enclosed questionnaire has been designed to take only a few minutes of your time. However, if the pressures of your busy day tempt you to stack it with things to be done "later," then please ask another member of your administrative staff to complete the questionnaire and return it in the envelope provided. As part of the study is concerned with administrative awareness of puppet use in the library, it is essential that someone in an administrative position reply.

An immediate response will be appreciated, but anything received by October 15 can be used.

Many thanks for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Denise K. Parker
MLS Candidate
Brigham Young University

Enclosure